

Gloucestershire Cycling Forum

Monday 13th May 2024

Attendees

Nigel Moor	Chair
Sarah Williams	Coordinator
Danielle Chick	Coordinator
Malcolm Taylor	Forum representative
Roger Smith	Forum Representative
Cllr Gray	Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
Cllr Willingham	Liberal Democrats
Cllr Cody	Green Party
Cllr Bloxsom	Labour Party
Ollie Hazel	GCC Bikeability Coordinator
Jo Atkins	GCC Thinktravel Manager
Alan Bullock	GCC Major Projects Team Leader
Alex Haworth	GCC Major Projects Project Manager
Jason Humm	GCC Director for Traffic & Transport
Jenny Goodson	GCC Highways Operations Manager
Howard Lowe	Newent Cycle Group
Tish Rickard	Newent Cycle Group
Atkins	
Members of the public	

Apologies

Colin Chick	GCC Director of Environment, Economy & Infrastructure
Gloucester City Council	
David Holland	Road Safety & Traffic Management Officer
Stroud District Council	

1 Welcome & Introductions

Nigel Moor welcomed attendees.

2 Maintenance

Jenny Goodson introduced herself and her role.

Maintenance operations were discussed: the team are looking at inventory with Alex Haworth which includes drainage, grass, hedges and other assets including signage and impacts on existing network. Safety inspections are being conducted by contractor Ringway and safety defects are identified under the safety inspection manual. A new section for cycleways is included in the manual. Safety inspection manual: <https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/media/simf2op2/highway-safety-inspection-manual-issued-august-2023.pdf>

Maintenance needs of network were discussed. Sweeping of cycleways is being discussed with district councils as it is their responsibility, however GCC and the districts are working together to provide a detailed programme. A few sections of

the cycle network have reported pine cones, and this has been dealt with on a reactive basis. During winter the tractor only treated the cycle network 4 times due to wet weather conditions and this is not a sufficient trial. GCC are working with the districts to see how this will be dealt with next winter.

Howard Lowe asked if there is a priority list for issues raised: The safety inspection manual picks up priority criteria, which depend on location and severity of issue. The assessment is based on a risk matrix. Howard raised that riders are often brought off road by pot holes and issues raised have been 'ignored'. Jason Humm noted that FixMyStreet is great for reporting issues as it is reported into GCC system. Jason noted that all issues will receive a response and feedback. No issues should be ignored. FixMyStreet:

<https://fixmystreet.goucestershire.gov.uk/>

Cllr Willingham raised that the Manual for Streets pot hole specification is different for bikes vs cars. He noted that there are missing signs on the Cycle Spine. Parts of the cycle way are blocked with signs and asked why these aren't placed in the road. Alan Bullock stated that this is a major projects matter to provide feedback. However, the reallocation of road space and minimum widths does not allow for signs to be in the roads, but there is a risk to pedestrians and cycle users.

Malcom Taylor asked if there is an inspection criteria included regarding updating the inventory and raised that the new cycleway in development in Bishops Cleeve ought to be considered. Highways Development Management (HDM) will deal with adoption and inspection and ensure it is built to standard.

Roger Smith raised planned inspections and waste collection funding. Districts will fund waste collection – GCC are to meet with them to discuss suitable equipment to deal with issues. Issues that are causing a significant problem are to be considered first. Audit to be reported on in November 2024.

3 Bikeability

Ollie and Jo provided a presentation on Bikeability which is the national programme for delivering national cycle training. GCC receive funding from Active Travel England (ATE) for every child we complete a Bikeability course with. Currently there are 33 instructors split across the county. Instructors have completed a Level 2 instructor course, a DBS check and SEN training.

Bikeability course levels:

Level 1 – younger children year 5 or 6

Level 2 – 30mph roads

Level 3 – independent journey – 11+

Low carbon journeys are important for school travel and creates a skill for travel beyond school, which in turn helps to reduce car dependency.

Targets set by ATE have shifted: GCC currently deliver training to 64% of primary school aged pupils, however the target has been increased to 80% by end of July

2025. Extra recruitment and engaging with schools is required to achieve this target.

To achieve this target GCC have created 13 school-based cycle hubs, providing each school with 2 storage boxes, 6 new bikes (8-11 age group bikes) and 6 new helmets. One of the conditions for the cycle hubs is for schools to encourage cycling beyond school. Host schools will provide Bikeability courses to neighbouring schools. Access to bikes and being able to ride a bike is a barrier to the 80% target.

Dr Bike Fix sessions have been running across the county, these have been provided around a week before a school starts the course to make sure all bikes are up to standard.

GCC are working with year 6 pupils transitioning to new schools to ensure they are confident on the roads and their new journeys.

Love to Ride are currently running the May Bike Month campaign which allows you to set your own goals and win prizes. Website:
<https://www.lovetoride.net/gloucestershire>

Cllr Cody raised emissions testing before and after school streets are implemented. Cllr Cody asked if this has been linked to air quality monitoring and if a difference has been shown in the data since implementing. Data does not cover detailed collection, which would be every 30 mins in peak hours. Jo Atkins to share the data available.

Cllr Cody noted that all primary schools in Tewkesbury are involved in Bikeability. ThinkTravel to notify Cllrs if they are struggling with engagement with schools.

Cllr Willingham raised that a public list of schools who are involved in Bikeability is needed. Different demographics and barriers should be known, along with a way to mitigate issues. Most deprived areas in Cheltenham include flats that do not have lifts, which makes bike storage difficult. In addition, children outgrow bikes fairly quickly. Jo Atkins stated that bike hubs have been picked specifically for areas with low uptake of Bikability. Adults not being able to cycle is the biggest barrier.

Post meeting note, Philip Williams requested that schools who do not participate in Bikeability be mapped so that propensity for cycling on those locations can be understood and relevant Cllrs can be contacted and encourage uptake where appropriate. Jo Atkins team to action.

Bikeability has replaced national cycle proficiency and the Bikeability Trust set the standards for training. Courses cost £9 per child. Pupil premium money can be used to cover the cost and Bikeability is free for children who receive free school meals.

ThinkTravel are always looking for new instructors, however they are at the right number currently. If you are interested in becoming an instructor, please contact ThinkTravel: thinktravel@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Paul Webber raised that lots of adults perceive the road network as dangerous and require skills and confidence.

Cllr Bloxsom asked how the promotion of cycling fits into roads near schools'. Parents want school streets; however GCC are no longer delivering them. Jo confirmed that ThinkTravel's role is to encourage behaviour change.

Scooter training is being delivered by Sustrans. 52 schools took part this year. All schools are to have up to date travel plans, and ThinkTravel are working with schools to refresh them. It was pointed out that GCC are to enforce rules if people are parking illegally near schools, the process to happen with local Cllrs first.

Cllr Cody asked if a paragraph from Comms regarding adult costs of training could be provided – Jo and Ollie to action. Getting head teachers and parents on board to discourage car travel and encourage active travel is essential.

Jo and Ollie to update the Cycling Forum in the spring next year regarding Bikeability targets.

4 Active Travel England Visit 15th April

Alan Bullock introduced himself and his role.

ATE (Active Travel England) are the government body for cycling and walking. Lindsey Holloway is the regional engagement manager for the South West, and she attended a site visit in Gloucestershire including a ride from Gloucester to Cheltenham along the cycle spine.

The county has ambitious plans for road safety and have ensured that the majority of the cycle spine route is now off road.

Cllr Gray complimented the team on organisation of the site visit. He raised that the route is very flat and easy to use, simple and practical. Other users were noted, over taking along the route. GCC are ahead with promoting cycling.

GCC have a good relationship with ATE, the quality of what we do and how we implement is recognised. Infrastructure is key but additional things like Bikeability, maintenance etc are also essential. GCC have a long-term ambitious strategy to secure significant funding, which comes from building relationships with investors. Highlighting our work encourages additional funding.

5 Casualty statistics

Sarah Williams discussed the request to see casualty statistics and presented an overview from Gov stats presented:

- Infrastructure complexities of junctions considered an issue with collisions, however 60% of accidents are not at junctions, are cyclists avoiding them?
- Men more likely to cycle than women.
- Fatalities usually involve a vehicle, if that vehicle is an HGV fatalities increase from 0.4% to 6% .
- Collisions are higher during peak hours on week days, spread throughout the day on Saturdays and at 11am on Sundays.
- Fatalities worse on rural roads, where road speeds increase.
- More dense population = more casualties
- Casualties reported through police

Sarah to request data on fatalities and share them with the group. New road safety manager and police from road safety partnership to attend a future forum.

20 mph case study/ 30 mph case study to be shared with the group. Difficult to change speed limits to 20mph in small villages.

LCWIPs are built on the basis of demand for walking and cycling. Network planning identifies how people can get to places. County wide cycling infrastructure plan is now published. Off road corridors are to be provided where road speeds are high and can't be reduced. Speed limits being reduced to be discussed at next forum. However, GCC are waiting for guidance on rural infrastructure from ATE

Cllr Willingham raised issues with operation close pass 1.5 m from centre of the bike. Video footage has been provided to the police and no further action was received despite dangerous passing recorded. The police are not prosecuting offenders, which is a big safety issue. Sarah to pass info onto road safety manager. Cllrs encouraged to use the police and crime commissioner to push this forward.

Road safety partnership to look into how we can better promote the highway code.

6 Date of next forum & AOB

Reporting of locked gates on dedicated Sustrans routes off road track. Ownership is complex on National Cycle Network, however the responsibility lies with the land owner and could be reported to the PROW team.

Cycle Spine Cheltenham to Gloucester – drainage on bike lane and road is not good and wet splashes are worse where traffic comes the other way.

Accessibility on Cycle Spine - other modes are detected at signals but cycles not in the track, this element of the route could be improved. Lessons being learnt from early parts of the spine. Signage was raised and Alan confirmed that these are being installed where needed.

National Highways met with Cllr Willingham regarding the subway under Elmbridge – lighting, cleaning and maintenance issues are now being addressed.

Themes for next meeting:

- Reducing speed limits.
- Gender representation at forum
- Cycle storage to encourage active travel.
- Planning to be strengthened regarding cycling at new developments.
- Cycle safety
- Implementing cycle schemes in 20mph zones

Dates of next forum

- 18th Nov 2024 15:00-17:00